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ABSTRACT

The study determined: (1) differences in dating preference attitudes for Black Chicano, and Anglo men regarding women of another race; (2) differences in dating preference attitudes for black, Chicano, and Anglo women regarding men of another race; (3) whether parental influence is perceived by college students to be more determinative in dating and marriage preferences than significant others and society; and (4) whether interracial dating considerations and actual dating practices vary on the basis of the race being dated. A self-administered questionnaire was given to 200 Anglo, 30 Chicano, and 24 black male and female college students between the ages of 18 and 30. Of the total sample, 93 percent had never been married, 4 percent were either divorced or widowed, and 3 percent were separated. Some findings were: (1) attitudes of males varied least on a black man dating a Chicano woman, with Chicano men slightly more agreeable than the other 2 categories; (2) attitudes of females were in fairly close agreement on black men dating Chicano women and Chicano men dating Anglo women; and (3) parental influence was perceived by the students to be more determinative in dating and marriage preferences and practices than significant others and society. (NQ)

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INTERRACIAL DATING AND MARRIAGE PREFERENCES AMONG BLACKS, CHICANOS AND ANGLOS

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INTERRACIAL DATING AND MARRIAGE PREFERENCES AMONG BLACKS, CHICANOS, AND ANGLOS

Studies on dating and marriage preferences have never commanded serious attention by researchers. This is most unfortunate, particularly since two significant events in recent history have taken place that are related to such considerations. The 1954 Supreme Court decision outlawing segregated public schools conceivably brought youth of different racial origins into closer contact and nullifying all legal prohibitions against interracial marriage by the Supreme Court in 1967 removed all structural and legal barriers that had kept the races apart connubially. It would be of great benefit to the social sciences if we had a substantial body of empirical data on dating and marriage preferences before these events as a base for measuring any changes across time in dating and marriage preferences and practices.

The general assumption that education contributes much to better understanding, interrelations and acceptance between racial groups has never been isolated sufficiently to determine its impact in relation to dating and marriage preferences among racial groups. However, the few studies in the past are generally with either a high school or college population which suggests that it is in secondary schools and institutions of higher learning that we expect to see the first evidence of any significant changes taking place.

Bogardus (1959) was the first to use a college sample in 1926 that approximated the personal intimacy involved in interracial marriage with measures of social distance between racial and ethnic groups. Gordon (1964) involved dating in a similar study. In both studies Mexicans and blacks were furthest in distance from whites. Thus the likelihood of any changes

in social distance affecting dating or marriage preferences were not significantly modified in nearly forty years. Hartley (1946) had concluded in the meantime that these distance patterns were so well established that they were "practically an American Institution."

Barnett (1963) was the first to examine the dating and marriage attitudes of American Caucasians toward American Orientals and Negroes. He surveyed a white young adult population (17-29 years of age) at a northwestern university to determine what white adults they expected to be most opposed to interracial dating and what arguments they expected these opponents to use. To determine the three persons expected to be most strongly opposed to interracial dating, Barnett rank ordered a list including parents, brothers and sisters, uncles, aunts, friends, religious leaders, and college peers. He also determined the three arguments his respondents most expected by rank ordering a number of reasons listed on his questionnaire generally advanced by opponents of interracial dating. Barnett (1963:356) found that parents were expected to be the strongest opponents and that opposition would be greater if the date were with a Negro. The strongest argument expected was that dating would lead to marriage and the children would suffer from discrimination.

Petroni's (1971) study of interracial dating in a desegregated high school, undertaken in the late sixties, provided a basis for some of the inquiries in this present study. He indicates that there is more acceptability to black male-white female dating than white male-black female dating among high school students as well as with their parents and peers. He interviewed individuals in groups of three or four. Among his 25 small groups were Chicano students. One "outspoken Chicano girl" is quoted as

saying that her parents "would rather see us go out with white people, who aren't as good, just because of skin color . . . [they] would frown on us dating a Negro, even if he has higher standards than the Mexicans we date now . . . a better person than many of the lower-class Mexicans we date now" (58). Indeed, what would be the attitudes of Chicanos towards blacks or whites on a university campus where they were an accepted minority?

A more recent study by Willie and Levy (1972) on the dating practices of black and white students at four upstate New York college campuses during 1969-1970 provided data with which to make comparisons. Of the 150 black students in Willie and Levy's study, 29% of the women and 64% of the men reported dating interracially. Thirty-six percent of the men and 45% of the women in their sample of 200 whites admitted dating interracially. This study also revealed that 22% of the blacks think that blacks should only date blacks, while 10% of the white men and 2% of the white women believed that blacks should only date blacks. Compared with earlier studies one could get the impression that the distance between whites and blacks had narrowed more in recent years. Unfortunately, we could not find any research that might have answered the question about interracial dating among whites, blacks and Chicanos.

In an article on mixed marriages, Porterfield (1973) reports an increase in black-white dating, particularly for young persons between the ages of 21 and 25, with variations by geographic regions. Regional differences in black-white dating preferences and practices obscure any overall changes in social distance patterns between blacks and whites which may have occurred through the years.

Dating preferences and practices as indicators of social distance patterns among black, Chicano and Anglo (terms that are customarily used on our campus) students were assumed to be valid bases to investigate whether there would be differences when three racial groups are included rather than two--Anglo and black. Blacks were not admitted to the Texas Tech campus until 1961. Chicanos, although few in number, have never formally been excluded. Would the black-Anglo dating preferences and practices differ from those on campuses studied in other geographic areas? And, would the presence of Chicanos affect distance patterns between blacks and Anglos? We had not found any studies on distance patterns between blacks and Chicanos on college campuses based upon dating and marriage preferences. We also wanted to determine whether parental influence was a greater influence than that of significant others and society in general in considerations of dating and marriage preferences.

Four hypotheses were used to determine (1) differences in dating preference attitudes for black, Chicano and Anglo men regarding women of another race; (2) differences in dating preference attitudes for black, Chicano and Anglo women regarding dating men of another race; (3) whether parental influence is perceived by college students to be more determinative in dating and marriage preferences than significant others and society; and (4) whether interracial dating considerations and actual dating practices vary on the basis of the race being dated. Other considerations, not hypothesized, were how respondents considered interracial marriages a handicap for children, whether such marriages were felt to be against the law, whether they believed God intended the races to intermarry, and whether interracial dating and marriage is immoral.

Sample and Method

A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to 100 male and 100 female Anglos, 15 male and 15 female Chicanos, and 12 male and 12 female black students, in classrooms, dormitories and the student center. This distribution, a judgement sample (Miller, 1970:56) was an attempt to reflect the racial distribution at Texas Tech at the time of the study when 1.6% of the 20,000 students were Chicano and 1% were black. We obtained usable questionnaires from 99 male and female Anglos, respectively, 15 Chicano male and 14 Chicano females, and 12 black males and 10 black females. Eighty-one percent of the sample were between the ages 18-22; 16% between 23-28; and 3% 29-30. Ninety-three percent were never married; 4% were either divorced or widowed; and 3% were separated. Sixteen percent were Freshmen; 21% Sophomores; 24% Juniors; 34% Seniors and the remainder Graduate students. Religious affiliations indicated that the majority (57%) were Protestant; 27% Roman Catholic; 10% said they were either atheist or agnostic, 1% were Jewish and 5% indicated no religious affiliation.

The respondent's choice on all statements of preference in the questionnaire and shown in the tables was made by selecting an attitude ranging from "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Disagree," "Strongly Disagree," to "No Answer." To obtain the means used in Tables 1, 2, 3, and 5, responses were scored: Strongly Agree = 2; Agree = 1; Disagree = -1; Strongly Disagree = -2; and No Answer = 0.

Findings

Hypothesis I, that there is no difference in dating preference attitudes for black, Chicano and Anglo men regarding dating women of another

race, was rejected. The data in Table 1-A show that the three greatest differences between the attitudes of the males of each racial group are: 1) between black and Chicano men relative to Anglo men dating Chicano women (-.65), with black men being more agreeable; 2) between black and Anglo men relative to black men dating Anglo women (.56), with black men almost twice as agreeable to dating Anglo women as are Anglo men to such an arrangement; and, 3) between Chicano and Anglo men relative to Anglo men dating black women (.60) with Chicano men more agreeable to such relationships than Anglo men. It should be noted that the attitudes of males vary least on a black man dating a Chicano woman, with Chicano men slightly more agreeable than the other two categories.

Table 1 about here

Hypothesis II, that there is no difference in dating preference attitudes for black, Chicano and Anglo women regarding dating men of another race, was also rejected. The greatest differences, shown in Table 1-B, are between black and Chicano women in relation to Chicano men dating black women (1.11) with black women the least agreeable to the idea. Black and Chicano women are also quite divergent in their attitudes relative to Anglo men dating Chicano women (-.80), with Chicano women over twice as agreeable as black women. In preferential dating attitudes relative to black men dating Anglo women, black women differ most with Chicano women (.74), a most decided difference with black women scoring below neutrality (-.10) on the issue. Attitudes among the women in the sample relative to black men dating Chicano women, and Chicano men dating Anglo women were in fairly close agreement.

Comparisons between men and women in each racial category were made also, as shown in Table 2. The greatest disagreement was between black males and females concerning black men dating Anglo women (1.18), and the closest agreement was relative to Anglo men dating black women. Chicano men and women disagree most on Chicano men dating Anglo women (-.61), which, interestingly enough, is not as great as the disagreement relative to black men and Anglo women. Chicano men and women are in fair agreement (.12) on white men dating black women.

Table 2 about here

There was more agreement between Anglo males and females on all statements with the exception of Chicano men dating Anglo women (-.25) and black men dating Anglo women (.21) where males and females differed most. In both cases Anglo men were more agreeable than were Anglo women to these dating patterns.

Hypothesis III: Parental influence is perceived by students in this sample to be more determinative in dating and marriage preferences and practices than significant others and society as shown by the means in Table 3. The third hypothesis is supported. There is firm agreement that who they date is their own business and that they will date anyone they want regardless of what other people think (1.02), and that society should not condemn people for dating and marrying interracially (1.09). On the contrary, there is only slight agreement that parents would be very opposed to their dating a person of another race (.39) and slight agreement that they would date a person of another race regardless of parents' feelings (.49). Similarly, there is only slight disagreement (-.44) to the assertion that they would not marry a person of another race if parents objected.

The least disagreement (-.07) is to the non-acceptance of the person of another race by family and friends if they married a person of another race.

Table 3 about here

Black males are the most affirmative that who they date is a personal matter (1.58) and that society should not condemn their dating and marriage to persons of other races (1.75).

Hypothesis IV, that interracial dating considerations and actual dating practices vary on the basis of the race dated, is supported by the findings. Data in Table 4 indicate that black and Chicano males and Chicano females actually date interracially more than they consider such practices; that for black females, considerations and dating are equal; and that Anglo males and females date interracially noticeably less than they consider such practices.

Table 4 about here

Looking at the means of other considerations in interracial dating and marriage preferences (Table 5), Chicano women (.29), Anglo women (.48), and Anglo men (.21) agree slightly that interracial marriage is viewed as an unfair handicap for children of such marriages, whereas black women (-.10), black men (-.25), and Chicano men (-.20) slightly disagree. Black males (-1.92) and Chicano males (-1.87) are strong in disagreeing that interracial marriage should be against the law. Black men also decidedly disagree most (-1.83) that God did not intend for the races to intermarry. Anglo males and females are least of all in disagreement. Chicano males disagree most (-1.67) that interracial dating and marriage is immoral, while conversely, black females disagree least (-.90).

Table 5 about here

Discussion

Social distance, using dating preference and practice measures, has not lessened at least in southwestern United States. Gordon (1964) found, in response to a survey of 40 colleges throughout the United States, that 24% of his sample of whites "date or allow child to date" blacks and 45% Mexicans. We found that 20% at our university had dated blacks and 42% had dated Chicanos. The findings of Willie and Levy (1972) from four upstate New York colleges would suggest that region (and perhaps the presence or size of the color minority student population) might account for the differences they found, namely 45% of the white women, and 36% of the white men date interracially with blacks. Gallup (1972) found that among 1516 adults 18 years of age or over that 25% approved interracial marriage, albeit 45% of the college students so approved. Although we did not ask specifically whether respondents approved of interracial marriage, we did ask for reaction to the statement "I do not believe God intended the races to intermarry." The weakest disagreement came from the Anglo students (See Table 5). Brannon (1970) offers some explanation that might be applicable to this point. He concludes that there are two basic types of church members--instrumental and devotional. The former type "serves some self-centered purpose other than the attainment of the religious experience . . . status, entertainment, business contracts, fellowship, relief from guilt, leadership training and other personal benefits" (42). Devotional orientation, on the other hand, is when "the religious experience is sought and valued as an end in itself . . . a part of everyday life, not a costume to be worn on Sundays or High Holy Days. . . . [providing the adherent] an effort to see how it applies to worldly activities." It is this type, Brannon

adds, who "is likely to apply to the shibboleths and prejudices of society the same thoughtful approach that he brings to religion . . . having little need to bolster his own self-image with racism." Prejudice and instrumental religion, he says, can satisfy many of the same psychological needs. It also appears that instrumental church membership focuses on acceptance of social norms and lifestyles as a way to achieve and maintain status. It can easily coexist with institutional and cultural racism both in the larger society and in the religious society. It usually supports institutional and cultural racism as part of the accepted value-attitude-system of society. In this way, the instrumental adherent seeks to protect his own social status. The reason for our finding in relation to dating and marriage preferences may be attributable to institutional racism, but that remains to be tested in another study.

Anglo young people also appear to be more strongly socialized both by individual and institutionalized racism to the "norms" of social distance between themselves and such color minorities as blacks and Chicanos. When each column in Table 2 is totaled, there is less variance between Anglo males and females (.04) than there is between black males and females (.77) and Chicano males and females (.64). These statements, dealing directly with dating preferences among the three groups controlled for sex, demonstrate the degree of similarity between white males and females. Black and Chicano males and females project a greater independence. In their perceptions of the general society's oft-expressed views about interracial dating and marriage considerations and practices, again it is the Anglo male and female that are in closest agreement (-.29) (Table 5) when compared with the totals subtracted for black males and females (-1.65) and Chicano males and

females (-1.73). Whether from parents, peers or an interpretation of societal views, Anglo youth, at least in this area of the United States, have internalized the dogma of strict maintenance of social distance between themselves and members of color minority groups.

In the matter of the respondents' perceptions of parental and societal influence on considerations of interracial dating, when the means are totaled, the Anglo male is less influenced (2.45) than the Anglo female (3.22). The data in this study, upon closer analysis, indicate that the Anglo male and the black female believe that they have the right to decide who they will date, independent of social and/or parental attitudes. The Anglo males agree firmly that who they date is their own business (1.19) as do the black females (1.30), with Anglo males agreeing more closely on this issue with black women than with Anglo (.84). This evidence, in view of the black female's rejection of the right of black men to date Anglo women (-.10) and their near agreement (.90) to the idea of dating Anglo men, poses a theoretical question that this study was not designed to probe.

The solid disagreement among Chicano males (-1.47) to the idea that they should not date Anglo women, and the agreement of black males (1.08) that they see nothing wrong with a black man dating an Anglo woman is a clear indication males of these groups feel it should be acceptable for them to date Anglo women even on a campus where they are a miniscule minority. However, the degree of disagreement to this attitude (-.10) on the part of black females should pose a problem for the black male's relationship with the black females on the campus where the black male has such a wide variety of Anglo female prospective dates. This can become a more critical issue where the black male as an athletic star may become

the object of the Anglo females' desires to break tradition and sanctions by dating the black male. This, in the light of his feeling of freedom of dating choice, is an issue, the outcome of which at this point is unpredictable.

The Chicano male, on the other hand, does not have to face such opposition from the Chicano female when dating Anglo females. The Chicano female disagreement with the attitude that a Chicano man should not date an Anglo woman (-.86) is less than a -1.00, disagreement mean. Perhaps Chicanos, in spite of their emphasis on La Raza Unida in this school's area, see themselves as they are classified by the U.S. Census Bureau, "whites with Spanish surnames." Chicano females' disagreement (-1.50) with the statement that an Anglo man should not date a Chicano woman is more than twice the disagreement with the statement that it is not right for a Chicano woman to date a black man (-.71), which supports the attitude expressed by the Chicano girl in Petroni's study discussed earlier. They do prefer the Anglo man to the black man. Thus, where Chicanos and blacks are available preferences to the Anglo male or female, Chicanos feel that blacks are the less acceptable choice.

There is no data in this study that explains why Chicano females and Anglo females and males are the only ones who agree that interracial marriage is an unfair handicap for children of such marriages. We would postulate, however, that for Anglos this "concern" for the welfare of children of interracial marriages is another factor of social distance. Where does an interracial couple place offsprings in the racial stratification scheme? How will neighbors and friends categorize the couple's offsprings? What kinds of explanations can a couple give to what the child's race is? The birth certificate

of the daughter of one of my Anglo graduate students married to a black man was held up for three days by hospital officials (not in Texas) trying to decide what "race" to put on the certificate--a legal requirement. There may be other problems about children of interracial marriages in the minds of Anglo students. Perhaps the Roman Catholic emphasis upon the family unit and the care of children may account for the Chicano females' fear of interracial marriages handicapping children, since Chicanos are largely Catholic.

The data in this sample, although not statistically conclusive, would indicate that in the area of the United States from which they are drawn, social distance between Anglos and blacks as indicated by dating preferences and practices does not differ with the earliest social distance studies. Further, though the evidence is not clear regarding Anglos and Chicanos, due to lack of studies in this area, we would argue, based on our findings, that if social distance between Anglos and Chicanos is narrowing, it is due in part to the similarity of ideas, particularly among the women of both groups, and what appears to be a more charitable attitude towards Anglos by Chicanos. Further research on patterns of social distance between Anglos and Chicanos may begin to explain the attitudes they expressed in this study. Based upon the findings of this small study, a colleague and I are planning to do more comprehensive research.

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TABLE 1: DATING PREFERENCE ATTITUDE MEANS FOR BLACK, CHICANO AND WHITE MEN AND WOMEN

	A. - MEN				B. - WOMEN			
	B* N = 12	C* 15	W* 99	Greater Differences	B* N = 10	C* 14	W* 99	Greater Differences
I see nothing wrong with a black man dating a white woman	1.08	1.07	.52	.56 B & W	-.10	.64	.31	.74 B & C
I see nothing wrong with a black woman dating a white man	.92	1.33	.73	.60 C & W	.90	1.21	.62	.59 C & W
I see nothing wrong with a black woman dating a Chicano man	1.08	.73	.88	.35 B & C	.10	1.21	.70	1.11 B & C
A Chicano woman should not date a black man	-1.05	-1.20	-1.05	-.15 C & B, W	-.90	- .71	-.87	- .19 B & C
A white man should not date a Chicano woman	-1.58	- .93	- .99	-.65 B & C	-.70	-1.50	-.96	- .80 B & C
A Chicano man should not date a white woman	-1.08	-1.47	- .99	-.39 B & C	-.70	- .86	-.74	- .16 B & C

NOTE: Negative signs in the lower half of the table are a measure of agreement, i.e., disagreement with these statements.

* B = black; C = Chicano; W = white

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TABLE 2: DATING PREFERENCE ATTITUDE MEANS BY SEX AND RACE

	Black			Chicano			White		
	W	M	Difference	W	M	Difference	W	M	Difference
I see nothing wrong with a black man dating a white woman	-.10	1.08	1.18	.64	1.07	.43	.31	.52	.21
I see nothing wrong with a black woman dating a white man	.90	.92	.02	1.21	1.33	.12	.62	.73	.11
I see nothing wrong with a black woman dating a Chicano man	.10	1.08	.98	1.21	.73	.48	.70	.88	.18
A Chicano woman should not date a black man	-.90	-1.05	- .15	- .71	-1.20	-.49	-.87	-1.05	-.18
A white man should not date a Chicano woman	-.70	-1.58	- .88	-1.50	- .93	-.57	-.96	- .99	-.03
A Chicano man should not date a white woman	-.70	-1.08	- .38	- .86	-1.47	-.61	-.74	- .99	-.25

NOTE: Negative signs in the lower half of the table are a measure of agreement, i.e., disagreement with these statements.

TABLE 3: PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL AND SOCIETAL INFLUENCE ON DATING AND MARRIAGE PREFERENCES (IN MEANS)

	WOMEN			MEN			
	B	C	W	B	C	W	TOTAL
My parents would be very opposed to my dating a person of another race	- .20	.00	.84	- .58	- .27	.23	.39
Regardless of my parents' feelings, I would date a person of another race if I wanted to	.50	.71	.34	.92	.67	.55	.49
Who I date is my business and I will date anyone I want regardless of what other people think	1.30	.36	.84	1.58	.93	1.19	1.02
Society should not condemn people for dating and marrying interracially	1.00	1.36	.97	1.75	1.40	1.02	1.09
I would not marry a person of another race if my parents objected	- .60	-1.14	- .11	-1.33	-1.07	- .42	- .44
If I married a person of another race, I do not think he or she would be accepted by my family and friends	-1.00	- .57	.34	-1.00	- .40	- .12	- .07

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TABLE 4: PERCENTAGES CONSIDERING AND DATING INTERRACIALLY, BY RACE AND SEX

Race	Sex	N	Have Considered	Have Dated	Race Dated
Black	Male	12	17	17	Chicano
				67	White
	Female	10	10	10	Chicano
				10	White
White	Male	99	43	11	Black
				22	Chicano
	Female	99	40	9	Black
				20	Chicano
Chicano	Male	15	13	13	Black
				67	White
	Female	14	19	21	Black
				43	White

TABLE 5: PERCEPTIONS OF OTHER INTERRACIAL DATING AND MARRIAGE CONSIDERATIONS (IN MEANS)

	Women			Men			
	B	C	W	B	C	W	Total Sample
Interracial marriage is an unfair handicap for children of such a marriage	- .10	.29	.48	- .25	- .20	.21	.26
Interracial marriage should be against the law	-1.50	-1.00	-1.27	-1.92	-1.87	-1.33	-1.36
I do not believe God intended the races to intermarry	-1.10	-1.21	- .92	-1.83	-1.27	- .97	-1.06
I believe interracial dating and marriage is immoral	- .90	-1.36	-1.13	-1.25	-1.67	-1.04	-1.12